

The Kennedy Bridge - Built 1899

Reflecting the development of Bundaberg



Queensland
Government

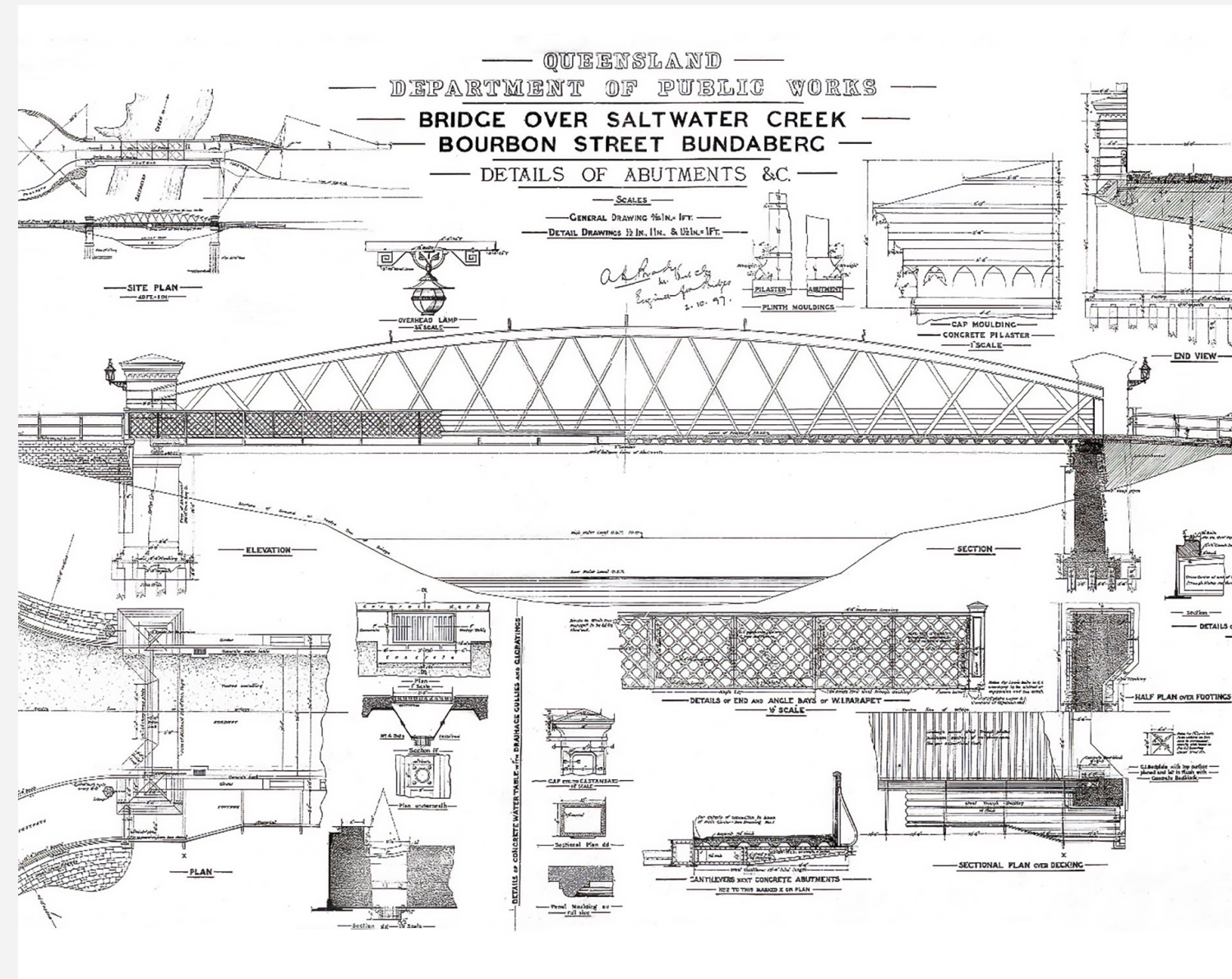


ENGINEERS
AUSTRALIA

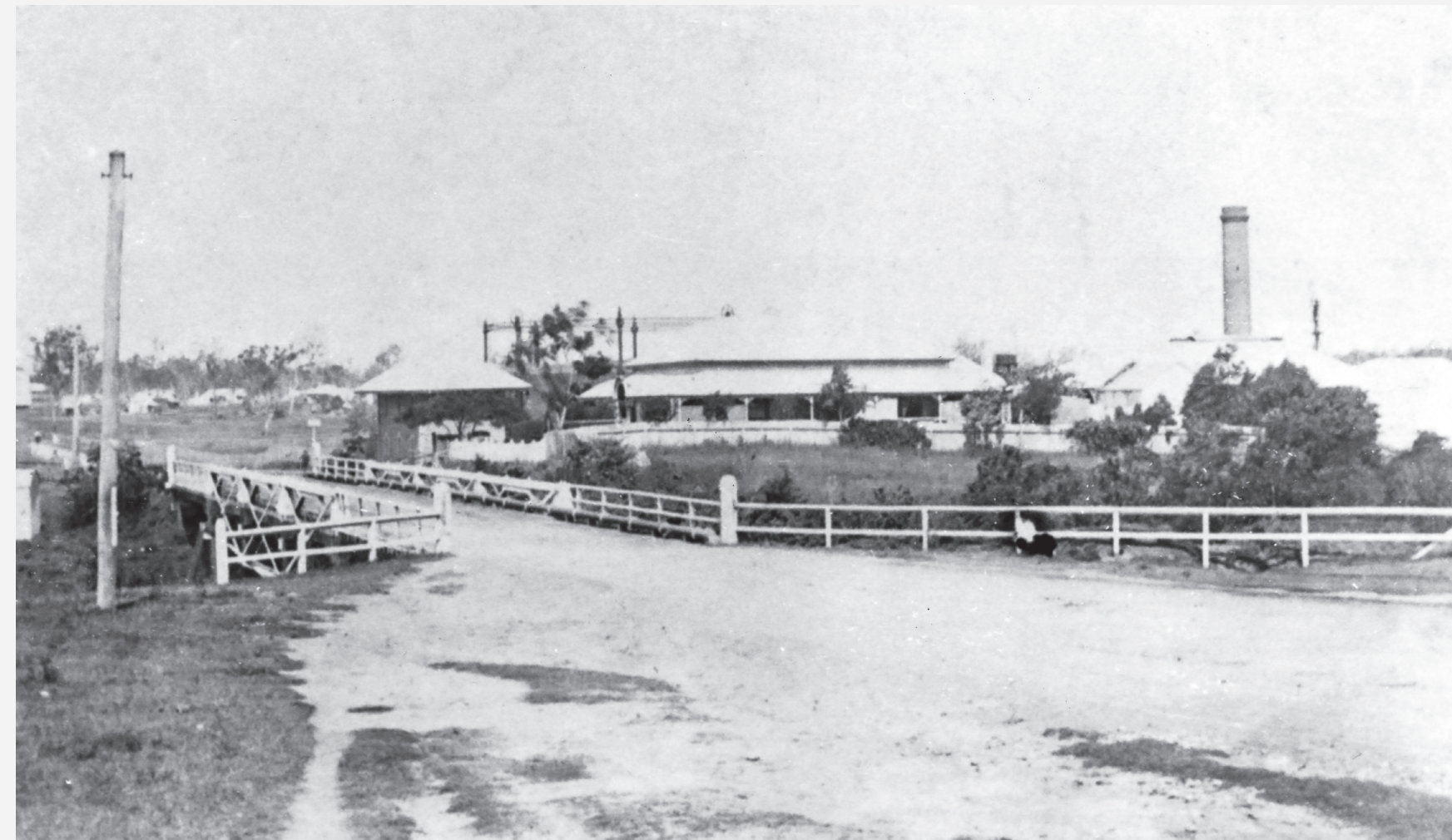
The History

The Kennedy Bridge (1899) was built to replace the dilapidated timber bridge built on the same site in 1878. This earlier bridge had consisted of three timber spans, the centre span having been trussed with iron rods. This bridge had been named the Kennedy Bridge, in honour of the Governor of Queensland at that time, Sir Arthur Edward Kennedy. The timber bridge was assessed in November 1896 by Alfred Barton Brady, Engineer for Bridges and Queensland Colonial Architect, and found to be unsafe. Brady's new design was completed in 1899 and retained the name of Kennedy Bridge. It was designed and built in conjunction with the Burnett River Bridge (1900), and was also modelled on the Victoria Bridge in Brisbane which spanned the Brisbane River from 1897 until it was demolished in 1969.

The construction of the bridge is closely linked to the expansion of the economy and the development of Bundaberg. The Kennedy Bridge, in conjunction with its counterpart, the Burnett River Bridge are symbolic of this turning point in the progress of the town and the strengthening of its connection to the outside world. In addition, since the Victoria Bridge was demolished, the Kennedy Bridge is now the oldest example of Brady's steel bridge design.



Department of Transport and Main Roads Library



Original Kennedy Bridge, Bundaberg, 1878-1898 (State Library of Queensland)



Construction of the Kennedy Bridge (Steve Connell Collection, The University of Queensland)

The Bridge and the Builder.

The Kennedy Bridge is a prime example of bridge engineering and construction from the late 19th century in Queensland. It is composed of a single steel span of two longitudinal hog-backed lattice girders. The span is 170ft (51.8m) and is carried on massive concrete abutments on pile foundations driven to a depth of 50ft (15.24m) below water level. The roadway is formed of steel trough plates filled with concrete, and covered with tarred metal, with concrete kerbs at each side. A footpath was included on the southern side.

The contractor for construction was John McCormick (sometimes referred to in sources as McCormack) and Son, and the total cost of the bridge's construction was just under £7000. Problems experienced during construction included the loss of imported steel from Scotland. The tragic shipwreck of the Loch Fergus, a ship travelling from Glasgow, Scotland, to Brisbane, occurred off of the coast of Belfast, causing delays in the construction of the bridge.



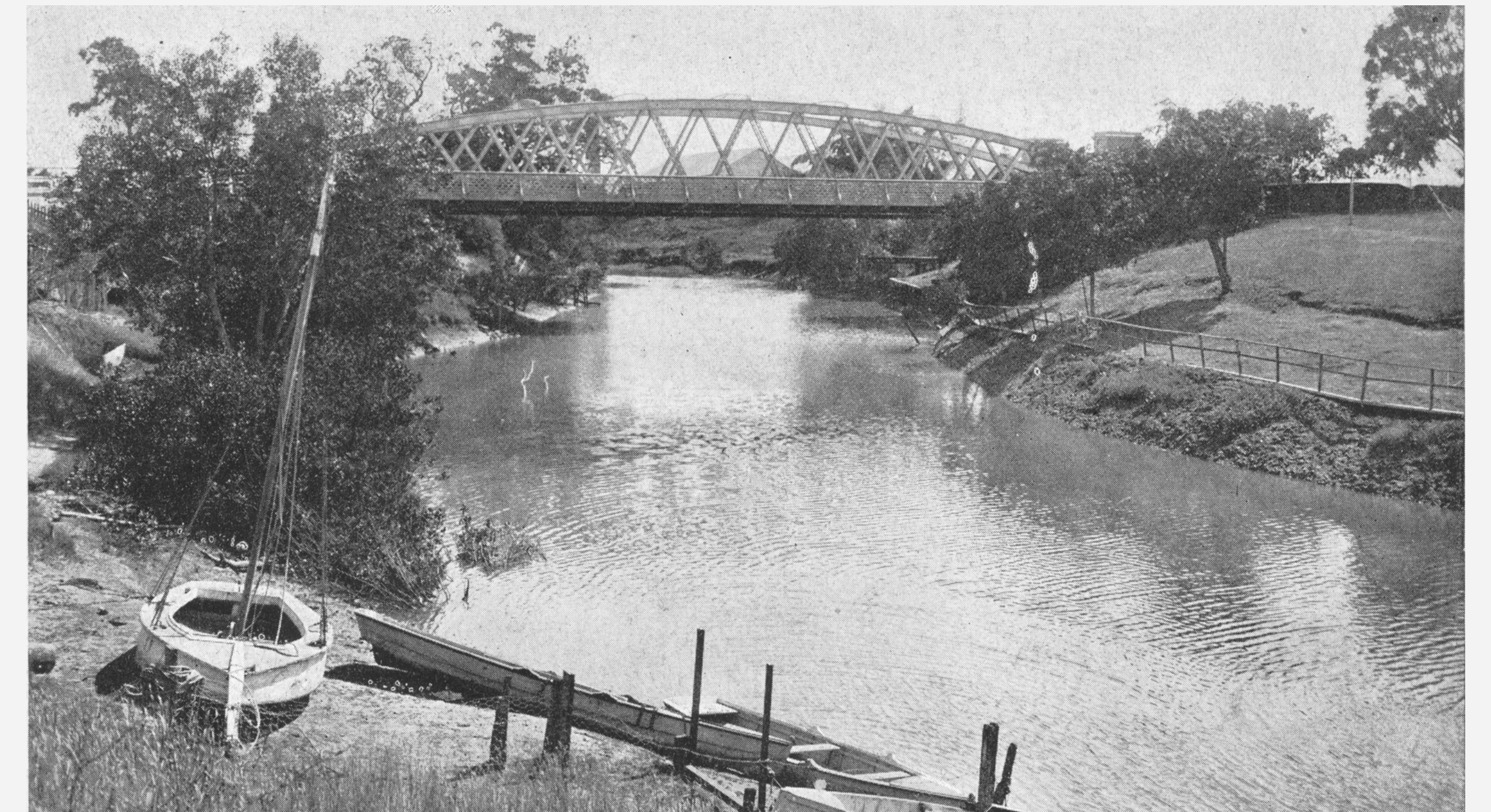
Kennedy Bridge c1911 (State Library of Queensland)

The Designer



Alfred Barton Brady (1856-1932)

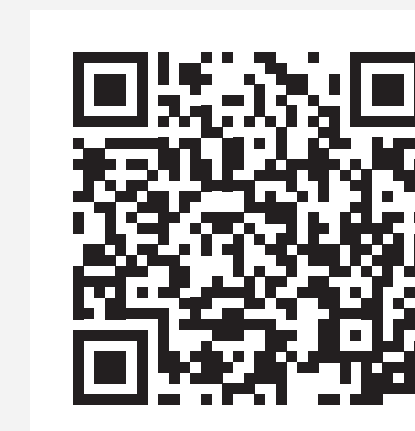
Alfred Barton Brady, an English-born civil engineer and architect migrated to Australia in 1884. From 1885 he held a position as Assistant Engineer for Bridges with the Railways Department in Queensland before being appointed Acting Engineer for Bridges in the Department of Mines and Works in June 1889. In the Department of Mines and Works and its successor departments, Brady had a distinguished career rising to the position of Government Architect and Engineer of Bridges in 1892 and Undersecretary in 1901. He was responsible for the design of many notable bridges throughout Queensland. He held this position until his retirement in 1922.



Page 24 of the Queenslander Pictorial supplement to The Queenslander 22 January 1916 (State Library of Queensland)

Recognition

Engineers Australia awarded the Kennedy Bridge an Engineering Heritage Marker in 2022.



engineersaustralia.org.au/heritageregister/search